

CALIFORNIA PHYSICIANS' SERVICE AND VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION CONTRACT

V.A.-C.P.S. Contract Is an Important Milestone in Solution of the Problem of Adequate Medical Care.—So important to the future of medical practice in California and perhaps to the Nation is the contract for medical care for veterans of all wars,—recently entered into by California Physicians' Service and Veterans' Administration,—that comment is again made thereon in this column.

Every veteran may be construed, in one sense, to represent the average family unit of four persons (himself and three immediate dependents or relatives). Hence, since California has more than one million veterans within its borders, the family unit of four would indicate that four million of California's citizens could come within the scope of medical influence and friendship, through the contractual set-up now operating through C.P.S., by arrangement with V. A.

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Future Will Offer Even Greater Opportunities for Service.—And if, as has been predicted, California, within the next several years, may have as many as two million veterans resident within its borders, the figure of four million interested and kindly disposed citizens then could be increased to eight million citizens!

Consequently, if the physicians of California render adequate and satisfactory medical service to the thousands and thousands of veterans in our State, it follows that these veterans, their families and friends will become natural supporters of those legitimate medical practice objectives concerning which the medical profession may have gone on record.

The above thoughts are of a generalized nature, but even so, they call attention again to basic political and other values when one possesses the good will of the electorate of California. In the present instance, much good can accrue to the medical profession of our State if adequate service is given to veterans.

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V.A.-C.P.S. Plan Is Being Put Into Operation.—On another page of this issue (page 269) is a photograph of the officials who were present when the C.P.S.-V.A. contract was signed. Its inspection is convincing evidence that the state medical societies of Michigan, California and other commonwealths, whose representatives have signed or will sign these V.A. contracts, are rendering the most powerful of all aids that have as yet been brought forward, to indicate to national and state legislatures, the press and the public-at-large that state medical society agencies that are sponsoring voluntary prepayment plans for medical care of citizens,—(in opposition to regimented and compulsory sickness insurance laws),—are the legitimate and best answers to the problem of securing adequate medical care for all citizens.

How Organized Medicine May Be Benefited.

—Attention has been repeatedly called to the fact that while surveys throughout the Nation have always indicated kindly regard by patients to their individual physicians, there had arisen in recent years, a feeling of more or less antagonism against medical organizations. Of course, this unhappy situation was due in good part, to misleading propaganda by the proponents of compulsory sickness insurance laws. However, so well fastened has this erroneous concept been established in the public mind, that medical speakers find it persistently expressing itself in antagonistic manner during forum discussions and similar meetings.

Here now, at long last, in the V.A.-C.P.S. contractual arrangement, lay citizens will have firsthand opportunity to set themselves aright concerning the real nature of medical organizations.

Provided, of course, that every individual physician will give wholehearted cooperation in the attainment of adequate medical service for veterans.

For members of the medical profession to fail in this opportunity, would lay the foundation for governmental and political medicine, a something that must not come to pass. Nor will it come to pass; because this time, we have a plan in which all physicians can play a proper part, leaving to experience the correction of any inadequacies that may arise.

Think This Over

Arguments for a state-controlled medical system lose their force in the light of the following editorial from the Christian Science Monitor:

"President Truman's citation of draft rejections as a compelling reason for the introduction of compulsory sickness insurance in the United States loses its plausibility on comparison with draft rejections in Britain where this insurance prevails.

"In his message recommending government medical care insurance, the President said, 'The number of those rejected for military service was about 30 per cent of all those examined.'

"But in Great Britain, which has had compulsory sickness insurance since 1911, the draft rejections were far higher. How they ran is indicated in the published Annual Report of the British Army. Rejections for the ten years ending with 1936 are available in the Annual Report for that year.

"During all the ten years, 677,515 were served with notice papers and 400,775 were rejected, or 59 per cent.

"Even allowing generously for the effects of a lower standard of living, if Britain after 25 years of sickness insurance, had a rejection rate practically twice that of America, there seems to be little argument in the draft rejections for socialized medicine."

As a postscript to this editorial, we quote Dr. John Cline of the California Medical Association, who declares, "There is nothing that government can do for you in the field of health insurance which you cannot do for yourselves and do better at less cost. The fullest advantages of health insurance cannot be attained by just compelling people to pay into a fund."

The facts and the record in Great Britain need thinking over before we consider any type of socialized medicine.—Ontario Report.